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Security Information

29 January 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SMITH

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Attached for PSB information is a study, prepared by PSB Staff on [REDACTED]'s suggestion, on the 25X1A EFFECTIVENESS OF THE US-UK-FRENCH DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL IN THE UN. [REDACTED] points out that: the study does not attempt to gauge the effect of the Western disarmament proposal on public opinion in the Soviet Union and other Iron Curtain countries; and it is possible that penetration of the USSR on this subject by VOA UN radio and other programs was sufficient to cause concern to the Kremlin.

The Staff Study CONCLUDES:

Permanence of the Disarmament Commission depends on whether effective world opinion can be convinced that steady progress toward actual disarmament is possible within this framework.

Soviets' reaction gives no sign of increased readiness to relax tensions or to settle the armaments question or any other major issue. They appear to interpret the Tripartite proposal as an act of psychological warfare.

Disarmament proceedings were substantially effective in reassuring European opinion that the US sincerely seeks security through reducing the arms burden.

A substantial beginning has been made in depriving the Soviets of their near-monopoly on "peace" propaganda.

The appeal of the proposal was appreciable in areas less directly involved in the cold war -- Near East, India and Latin America -- but was limited by basic skepticism about the great power conflict.

We have thus far successfully avoided the danger of giving the impression that the issue of global war or peace depends on the immediate course of the disarmament proceedings.

We should continue to present the disarmament proposal as a steady, long-range effort to establish a basis for eventual disarmament when settlement of other issues and consequent relaxation of world tensions permits.

Defensive character of the Soviet refusal to accept genuine inspection and other safeguards can be exploited psychologically to gain acceptance for this aspect of the Western plan and to show the consequent necessity for a relaxation of the iron curtain.

DISCUSSION section contains details on the broad opportunities and dangers inherent in the disarmament proposal, with comments on the degree of success which appears to have been attained, or to be attainable, in exploiting opportunities and averting dangers. It points out that the only sure way of overcoming the impression that the disarmament proposals are insincere and purely propagandistic is to continue efforts long enough to show conclusively that the Tripartite proposal represents settled US policy. Also, it would appear that the problem of presenting the necessarily complex Western approach in terms that can compete psychologically with the specious Soviet approach constitutes one of the most difficult and most important psychological problems connected with the disarmament issue. There is no clear indication that the Soviets, in the disarmament debate, have met with material success to foster Western disunity and retard efforts to rearm.

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